Sibesty NOT THE DAUGHTER BÛT THE MOTHER OF ORDER PROJUDION

Vol. IX. - No. 27.

NEW YORK, N. Y., SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 1893.

Whole No. 261.

"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!

Shines that high light whereby the world is sured;

And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

Jow

JOHN HAY.

Problems of Anarchism.

PROPERTY.

4. - Economic Fallacies vs. Property.

I am as desirous to be frank and avoid sophistical surprises in the course of the argument as I am anxious to convince the reader of its soundness in foundation and correctness in conclusion.

The conviction that is irresistibly forced upon me as the result of an unprejudiced investigation, conducted with tolerable care and some familiarity with the subject, is that modern Communists, whether of the imperfect type of cast-iron Socialists, like Gronlund and Bellamy, the modified school of quasi-scientific and evolutionary Social Democrats, like G. B. Shaw, Sidney Webb, and H. M. Hyndman, or the motley groups of revolutionary free Communists usually called Anarchists, the greatest of whom is perhaps Pierre Kropekine, are from an economic standpoint substantially

The bash of all their criticisms of existing social conditions are economically identical, and converge in a demand for the abolition of private property. It is needless to demonstrate the Communism of those who themselves accept the appellation, but many of the advocates of its milder forms would repudiate identity with its more logical and consistent exponents.

Free Communists like Morris avow their belief in an absolute equality of condition according to the formula, "To each according to his needs, from each according to his capacities." This necessarily involves the abolition of private property. The Communists who style themselves Anarchists accept the same creed, and attempt to prove that it expresses the tendency of civilization; nay, they go still farther, and, accepting the doctrine of evolution, argue that the realization of their ideas is its necessary outcome. Says Kropotkine in the work previously quoted, "The prejudice in favor of private property is passing away.

The tendency of the nineteenth century is toward free Communism — not from the brains of philosophers and

The tendency of the nineteenth century is toward free Communism, — not from the brains of philosophers and thinkers, but germinating in the thoughts of the working masses."

ng masses.

Now, hear the political economists of the Fabian Society. In demonstrating the economic basis of Socialism G. B. Shaw takes us through the laws of rent, exchange, value, wages, etc., as set down by political economy, without, however, adding much to dispel the fog in which it is still enveloped. Sunaming up the result, he says:

"This then is the economic analysis which convicts private property of being unjust even from the beginning, and utterly impossible as a final solution of even the individualist aspect of the problem of adjusting the share of the worker in the distribution of wealth to the labor incurred by him in its production. All attempts yet made to construct true societies upon it have failed.

. . . That our own civilization is already in an advanced stage of rottenness may be taken as statistically proved. That further decay instead of improvement must ensue if the institution of private property be maintained is economically certain. Fortunately private property in its integrity is not now practicable." (Essays in Socialism, pp. 28-24, 1890.)

This quotation epitomizes the whole book. Here we have the essence of the teaching of every school of

Communism, in the most careful, rational, unrevolutionary, and scientific popular work that has yet appeared; not from the pen of an irresponsible and imaginative story-teller lacking clear knowledge of all ecoaomic principles, but the collaborated efforts of practical political economists abreast of the scientific and sociological teaching of our time. For this reason alone have I introduced it here and shall use it as the mirror of those views of which it is my purpose to prove the unsoundness.

If we find that such an attack upon the principle of private property has no valid foundation, and that it is due not to any facts or proved conclusions to be found therein, we may then dispense with the necessity of discussing the point with less rational, less able, and more imaginative and revolutionary opponents of the institution of individual property. Before proceeding with the argument, I shall give some further extracts in order to conclusively show that no real economic difference exists between the Social Democrats and the extremest Communists. On page 131 we are told that "the respect for the rights of property has diminished since the many lost their individual possessions (I); it is now little more than a tradition inherited from a former state."

In the casay on Property under Socialism, page 189, we read: "To whatever extent private property is permitted, to that extent the private taking of rent and interest must be also permitted. If you allow a selfish man to own a picture by Raphael, he will lock it up in his own room, unless you let him charge something for the privilege of looking at it. Such a charge is at once interest. If we wish all Raphael's pictures to be freely accessible to everyone, we must prevent men, not merely from exhibiting them for payment, but also from owning them. This argument applies to other things besides Raphael's pictures." Then follows the doctrine of socialization of capital, etc., and public organization of labor.

I am tempted here to analyze the above statement, which is Communistic in the baldest manner, and show its utter ridiculousness, but pause a moment first.

It will have been observed that I did not discuss the grounds, which are set out in some twenty pages preceding the extract I have given, upon which G. B. Shaw 'convicts private property of being unjust even from the beginning." Why not? Because after the most sympathetic examination of his evidence I find not one single reason, neither fact, "law," nor inference, no ground whatever for convicting private property, as I understand it and have in an earlier part defined it, of any of the enormous crimes laid at its door. The only possible explanation I can give of this paradox is that before the writer of the Economic Basis of Socialism began the work he entertained an opinion against private property; and in reviewing the teachings of political economy as well as in stating the evils that exist in the industrial world today he naturally throws all the blame upon that institution. But not one single evil, not even that most pessimistic economic "law" of subsistence wages, does he trace to private property as the primary cause.

With just as much reason we might say it was the desire of obtaining happiness with the least exertion that has produced economic evils, and could trace them to that tendency in mankind with as much logical proof as the Fabian essayist adduces to show their origin in the desire of man to own property.

In a later portion of this work I shall take up this question and show the nature of the fallace common to all Communistic Socialists of ascribing effects to causes

that are not causes at all, but merely preceding conditions, which are themselves only effects of causation further removed and not as plainly seen. We shall then, I trust, see the true economic causes of the evils of capitalism. But in order to do so we must clear away the rubbish of prejudice, misconception, false theories, and impossible remedies in which nearly all writers and social panacea vendors have succeeded in burying the real issues.

Returning to our last extract from "Essays in Socialism," let us endeavor to find its meaning. Passing over the error of taking as an example a rare picture impossible to duplicate to show that wealth, most of which can be reproduced indefinitely, should not be made private property, we shall take the argument as it stands. And indeed it behooves us to make the best of it, for it is the only direct attempt in the whole book to prove in the concrete that common or public property is a wise and necessary arrangement, and that private property is the reverse.

The first assumption that rent and interest are due to private property is not proven in any part of the work. We shall see in the course of our inquiry that on the contrary both rent and interest are the result of monopoly, of restricted individual liberty, and of the consequent limitation of private property. We are next told that, if we admit a man's right to do, use, or possess a certain thing, say to own a picture, — a piece of property, —he may abuse that right, may act wrongly, or want to impose n others. Therefore we must deny the right, and this argument applies to other rights which he might abuse.

In other words, it is just to deny a man's rights because he may not exercise them properly; it is unjust to permit anyone to own anything because some one may not be satisfied with merely owning something.

According to this mode of reasoning no mar should be allowed to possess defensive weapons because it is easy to conceive of rircumstances in which he would injure others; it would be justifiable to deprive "men of freedom and imprison them forever because some men abuse their liberty and commit aggressions.

Now, if, instead of dealing with imaginary evils which might arise under some circumstances, and making private ownership responsible for abuses of which it is merely the instrument, but not the cause, we were to seek what would be the natural consequences which would flow from free conditions unhampered by evils and abuses that are no essential part of the property institution, and find the natural * results under natural conditions, then we should avoid the absurdities which the above method of reasoning entails.

There is one thing which easily explains many of the fallacies into which Socialists have fallen in reasoning upon economics. They have habitually taken the conclusions and generalizations of a crude and immature economic science, especially where it coincided with the Socialistic pessimism which sees nothing but evil in the existing order and prophesies increased misery, constitutional decay, and a speedy and violent end for our whole civilization. So that they have fallen easy victims to the traps prepared for them by bourgeois economists, who, finding things so bad, and having no other function than to justify them, have set to work and constructed theories to fit into the ever shifting facts, and then labeled them "laws," the "laws of Political Economy," with as much effrontery as if they had dis-

(Continued on page 8.)

^{*}I use the word natural here in the sense of being free from artinicial and unnecessary conditions—anti-normal—statist; of course everything that is may be called natural.

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Still Preaching Goodness.

J. Wm. Lloyd, in his recent article in Liberty, "Shall We Colonize?" pointed out most clearly and admirably the difficulties in the way of reform by colonization, as well as the conditions upon which the success of a colony depends. I valued his article principally because the whole tendency of its influence was to discourage colonization, the difficulties being so certain and the requisites so remote. But his position seemed to me seriously defective in the assumption that, because the life of a colony formed to secure superior social conditions depends upon the character of the colonizers, therefore the achievement of superior social conditions in the world at large depends upon an improvement in the character

of the world's citizens, "While Anarchistic colonies remain impossible," says Mr. Lloyd, "Anarchism at large remains impossible." If this be true, not only we Anarchists, but Socialists of every stripe, may as well give up the ghost. But it is not true. The very gist of our argument and our hope is that, freedom once allowed, social conditions steadily improve through the natural working of economic processes, and as a result character improves. Now, to secure the necessary freedom, no improvement in character at all akin to that required for a successful colony is needed, but only so much education in political economy on the part of a small minority as shall enable them to appreciate even dimly what freedom will secure. Mr. Lloyd sees from his experience that colonies generally fail from lack of character, but he does not clearly discern for what purpose colonies need character in their members. They need this primarily to make them, not necessarily ideal communities, but simply successful productive enterprises. Colonies which achieve thus much generally live long. They may not much resemble More's Utopia, but they are at least viable. Now, society at large already has this quality of viability. It is a fairly successful productive enterprise, to start with; not nearly so successful even productively as it will be under new social conditions, but still successful enough to live. . There already exists in its members, on the average, a considerable degree of those virtues upon which we are dependent for getting work done. The world at large, then, is not confronted by the same difficulties that confront a colony. It is bothered at present principally by the problem of distribution. To the settlement of this problem nothing is needed but freedom. To pretend that, freedom once secured, men will still have to become angels without wings in order to achieve a better society is to give away the Anarchistic case. How sick I am of the gospel of goodness!

Rights.

To the Editor of Liberty:

A friend handed me a few back numbers of Liberty, and in looking them over an article in No. 252, contributed by Stephen T. Byington, attracted my attention. In your rejoinder you say:

"I take issue with him at the very start by denying the dogma of equality of rights, —in fact, by denying rights altogether except those acquired by contract."

Again vou say: "Man's only right over the land is his might over it. If his neighbor is mightier than he and takes the land from him, then the land is his neighbor's, until the latter is dispossessed in turn by one mightier still. But while the danger of such dispossession continues, there is no society, no security, no comfort. Hence men contract. They agree upon certain conditions of land ownership, and will protect no title in the absence of the conditions fixed upon."

If I understand these quotations correctly, you maintain that there are no rights and no wrongs; and, consequently, no morals except those gained by contract and might. If this be a correct understanding of what you mean, then I respectfully take issue with you at

The existence of one person is equalled by the existence of another. So long as two persons stand thus related, neither invading the life or liberty of the other, then there is no right and no wrong, and, consequently, no morals. But the moment either invades the life, liberty, or property of the other, right and wrong and morality begin. The normal condition of a healthy man is freedom from pain. He who disturbs that normal condition by a blow, or otherwise, has done an injury. An injury is a wrong, and a wrong is an immoral act. Therefore wrong and morality begin with invasion of

liberty. Hence non-invasion is Right, and in-vasion is Wrong, contract or no contract,

Might is also invasion. If there be but one wild apple tree, with one ripe apple on it, all men have equal freedom to get it. But if I first climb the tree. pluck the apple, and eat it, it is mine, contract or no contract.

By parity of reasoning, he who first squats on a piece of vacant land and uses it to gain his livelihood is entitled to occupancy and use, and all should respect this natural title. Otherwise there is, as you say, "no society, no security, no comfort."

While, therefore, I agree with you in your conclusions. I reject your premises, and maintain that there is right and wrong, and moral law, arising from the fact that I have a right to be equally with others.

Regarding the matter of economic rent, in the discussion between you and Mr. Byington, I desire to say that, in my opinion, it would almost entirely disappear if there were no usury in commerce. Nor would there be any monopolistic rent, if there were no monopoly of the land. Abolish all monopolies, then usury in commerce would disappear by competition, and rents would fall to zero, or to cost. WW. HANSON.

280 HALSEY STREET, BROOKLYN.

When I began to read Mr. Hanson's letter, I hoped he was going to reason with me; instead, he only contradicts me. I deny right and wrong. Mr. Hanson answers that an injury is a wrong. But why? Mr. Harson does not tell me. Why is one man bound to reirain from injuring another? That is the question which the moral ists must answer. I know plenty of reasons why it is expedient for one man to refrain from injuring another. Therefore I advise him to refrain. But if my reasons do not commend themselves to his judgment; if my view of expediency does not coincide with his, - what obligation is there upon him to refrain?

Mr. Hanson tells us that one man's existence is equalled by another's. This is true if the men are equally able to maintain their existence. Otherwise, they are manifestly unequal. In that case, I see no reason, as far as moral obligation is concerned, why one should not subordinate or destroy the other. But if each of these men can be made to see that the other's free life is helpful to him, then they will agree not to invade each other; in other words, they will equalize their existences, or rights to existence, by contract.

All should respect the occupant's title to land, says Mr. Hanson, because in the absence of such respect there is no society, no security, no comfort. Why all? Why any except those who agree with Mr. Hanson and with me that such respect is essential to comfort? If a man thinks that this respect is the cause of our unsocial conditions, as some men do; or, if a man finds his comfort in the excitement of insecurity, as some men do, -- why should either of these men have any regard for the occupant's land-title?

Before contract is the right of might. Contract is the voluntary suspension of the right of might. The power secured by such suspension we may call the right of contract. These two rights - the right of might and the right of contract - are the only rights that ever have been or ever can be. So-called moral rights have no existence.

In March there will appear in London the first number of "a quarterly magazine devoted to the defence of freedom and of the right of property," entitled "The Liberty Review," edited by Frederick Millar, and numbering among its contributors Wordsworth Donisthorpe, Alfred Milnes, M. D. O'Brien, J. C. Spence, and (possibly) Auberon Herbert. The ain't doin' much work of any kind now.

subscription price is sixty cents a year, and the address is 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet St., London, E. C., England.

"Theirs Not to Reason Why."

Friend Tucker:

Here is a funny story of official "damfoolishness" in the United States Navy, which you may not have seen, though I suppose you read the engineering papers more or less. It is by a correspondent of the "American Machinist," and is reprinted in "Engineering News" of

"I notice that Chief Melville in his report mentions the possibility of an engineer being called from important work to answer calmly questions regarding the escape of smoke from the funnels

"That this is not an exaggeration the following statement of an actual and recent occurrence will show The ships -- four in number -- of the squadron of evolution were slipping comfortably along at about eight knots speed, being on a long run, when the flagship signaled the next in line: 'Safety - valve - blowing.'

"The captain, who was on deck at the time, began to think he was learning something, as he had not noticed any sound; but, looking up at one of the pipes, sure enough there was a small show of steam. chief engineer was summoned. 'Mr. Blank, do you need to have your safety-valve blowing?'

"'That valve is not blowing, sir; the steam pressure is not within thirty pounds of it. That steam you see there is from the leaky valve which I told you of three weeks ago as requiring attention; and, being a new patent valve, I do not know exactly what is inside of it, and I want plenty of time before me when I start in to overhaul it '

"'Well,' says the captain, 'there is not bunting enough in the fleet to convey that answer, and we have to give it soon; you say the safety-valve is not blowing?' 'Yes, sir.' 'And the admiral says it is, and I must not argue with the admiral with that show of steam at the pipe-top.'

"So the answer went up: 'I know it,' and the admiral on his flagship ordered, 'Stop it,' and the answer was, 'I cannot.' Then the admiral, supposing that some disrespect to his rank, which was only 'nickelplated' or 'acting,' was intended, ran up the signal: Comman'ing officer suspended from duty.

Then at the next post there was a heap of correspondence, and charges and counter-charges, during which, as by good luck this engineer was not involved, he used his time to quietly grind in that offending valve. The fleet and the navy department were stirred up for six months over this thing, and all because an acting rear admiral would meddle with trifling affairs; he had learned somewhere that it was not 'good form' in the English service to show steam at their pipes.'

Yours. T. P. PERKINS. LYNN, MASS., FEBRUARY 12, 1893.

The Labor Statistician At Work.

[Toronto Grip.]

When the last census was taken, the enumerators employed received fifteen cents for each manufacturing industry discovered, the stimulating effect of which provision is seen in the extraordinarily large number of new industries reported, notwithstanding the stringency of the times. The following gives an idea of how the thing worked:

ENUMERATOR (to farmer, after having filled in the usual details) - "You don't happen to know of any manufacturing industries around here, do you?"

FARMER - "Kain't say as I do. Lemme see, they's a tavern at the corners. Mout you call that a industry, now?'

ENUMERATOR (regretfully) - "H'm. I'm afraid not. Is there nothing else there?"

FARMER - "Oh, yes - a hard-shell Baptist church an' a blacksmith shop, but I guess they ain't runnin' the church much now. The last pasture wuz starved out, seein' most of the people has gone-

ENUMERATOR - "Never mind about the church. Blacksmith there you say. Makes horse-shoes, I sup-

FARMER - "Reckon not. Git 'em ready made now." ENUMERATOR - "But he could make horse-shoes if he was put to it, I suppose?"

FARMER - "Well, he mout of he wan't too full. He

ENUMERATOR - "Could make horse-shoes - good. I'll ring him in anyway. Got to have some industries in this township. And yourself, now. Don't you manufacture anything here - say axe handles, or shingles, or something?"

FARMER - "Say, look here, mister, I ain't no Injun nor yet no lumberman. Got hard enough work to scratch a livin' at my own business 'thout foolin' with things I knows nawthin' erbout."

ENUMERATOR - "Don't can down any fruits or tomatoes or honey, or anything to sell?"

FARMER - "No, sir, I'm jest a farmer, an' a durned fool, too, for stickin' at such a starvation business so long. Reckon I'm too old to change now, though."

ENUMERATOR - "Doesn't your wife sometimes try and make a little money by kaitting stockings to sell?" FARMER - "Oh, once in a while. I guess she might

have made as much as five dollars last year outen stockin's "

ENUMERATOR - "Good. (Writes.) 'Mrs. Hannah Grubber-knitting factory.' And I suppose your daughters and the hired girl help sometimes?

FARMER - "Girls don't seem to take to knittin" much these days. They might help Hannah onct in a while "

ENUMERATOR - "Ah, that's first-rate. (Writes.) 'Five hands.' Ah, we're getting on. Tamarack township won't show up so badly in the way of industries, after all. Good-day, Mr. Grubber. If there's a smell of an industry in my district, it's going to figure in the returns, you bet."

The Advantage of Philosophy.

[Paley's "Greek Wit."]

Aristippus, being once asked: "What is the use of being a philosopher?" replied: "If all laws are abolished, we shall go on living just as we now do."

Problems of Anarchism. (Continued from page 1.)

covered the law of gravitation or invented the atomic The "law" of rent, the law of wages, "the iron law," as it has been fitly named, though it would have been still more aptly styled the cast-iron law, for it will break in pieces with the first fall. - these pessimistic generalizations were seized upon by Socialists, whole systems built upon them, theories woven, and history written years in advance upon the strength of the structures thus raised, all of which has proven as delusive as the foundation upon which it was erected. This will be sufficiently exemplified with ample evidence in due course. I touch upon it here merely to show cause why the otherwise able Socialists of the Fabian Society have accomplished so little of positive results, unless it has been to fill the air with the decomposed dust of the dry bones they have shaken up with so much vigor and skill.

Generally speaking, Socialist economics are Marxian economics, which in turn are of the uncertain and suspicious nature just described. Social Democrats, Communists, and Revolutionaries alike accept their economic reasoning from this source. The works I have referred to bear evidence on every page. Witness also the chapters from Marx's "Capital," which Albert R. Parsons gives as the economic basis of his "Philosophy of Anarchism." The erroneous nature of this teaching will shortly be demonstrated.

The latter portion of this article may seem a digression from the main course of the argument; it could hardly be avoided, however, in dealing with the economic arguments of the avowed opponents of private property. The next will also partake in the digression, as it will review some other considerations, not directly dealing with property alone, but still closely related to it. WM. BAILIE.

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